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Rausch-Extase-Mystik: Grenzformen religiöser Erfahrung . Hubert Cancik

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Review

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by Hubert Cancik

Review by: Ioan Petru Culianu

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The debate about "rationality," very important in Germany today, where the philosopher Habermas enjoys a certain influence, is applied by R. Piepmeier to the sociology of religions. In the same section, Karl-Heinz Kohl discusses the concepts of fetish, taboo, and totem, while Günter Kehrer, in an interesting and original essay, follows the impact of the family on religion as both a theoretical and a practical problem in the world religions.

The second section opens with a precious piece by Gladigow on ethological anthropology. It is a very useful survey of this new direction, related, on the one hand, to Lorentz and Julian Huxley and, on the other, to Th. Dobzhansky, R. W. Burhoe, and the well-known review *Zygon*. Gladigow's survey also contains interesting critical observations. A prospective "physiology of religion" is the theme presented by W. Wuttke-Gronberg, followed by ethological considerations of hierarchy on the basis of evidence concerning the order followed by animals and men in collective meals. A psychological analysis of Jewish prophecy by Bernhard Lang closes this original and rich survey of new trends in anthropology today and their influence in Germany. [IOAN PETRU CULIANU, *University of Groningen*]

Rausch—Extase—Mystik: Grenzformen religiöser Erfahrung. Edited by HUBERT CANKIK. Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1978. Pp. 184.

Tradition claims that German scholars are usually *gründlich*. The present teaches that they can be witty as well. This is certainly the case with Hubert Cancik, the editor of this book on intoxication (ritual and otherwise), ecstasy, religious enthusiasm, and mysticism. The book is a product of the *Tübinger religionswissenschaftliche Ringvorlesungen*, which take place every year.

Hubert Cancik opens the book with a survey of those reasons that render its subject matter timely, from the consumption of drugs to the—very impressive—German tradition of romantic interpretation of religion, a tradition starting with Chr. G. Heyne and J. G. Herder in the eighteenth century and ending with Rudolph Otto and (surprise!) Sigmund Freud. The first contribution, on ecstasy and enthusiasm, is by Burkhard Gladigow, himself the editor of several volumes dedicated to the *Ringvorlesungen* and one of the first Europeans to take seriously the ethology of religion. Gladigow presents an interesting survey of the theories of the relationship between the consumption of drugs and religious experience. Several other contributions present the *status quaestionis* of particular fields of investigation. Heinz Halm, the author of a recent survey of Islamic gnosis, deals here with particular types of Islamic mystic, such as the sufi and the dervish, and their ecstatic experience (*hāl*). Peter Schreiner presents Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi as representatives of modern Hindu mysticism. European ethnography comes under study in Utz Jeggle's "Alcohol and Industrialization," which concerns both the vogue of alcoholism at the beginning of the twentieth century and its sociological interpretations. Franciscan mysticism is only a pretext for Hubert Cancik to make an interesting parallel between religious cultivation of pain and modern methods of killing pain. According to Cancik, a certain traditional experience of religion, also

expressed in the paradigm of the life of Saint Francis, is based on the endurance of pain. To a very recent date, the church has opposed any medical killing of pain on the grounds that pain, as a part of human fate, is given by God. Indonesian mysticism is the subject of a paper by Wolfgang Marschall. A last contribution on a particular case is by Hans Mayer and represents an analysis of the "magic theatre" in Hermann Hesse's *Steppenwolf*. Mayer comes to the conclusion that Hesse had probably not made, as several interpreters claim, a personal acquaintance with drugs. Two articles, by Wolfgang Kretschmer and Hubertus Halbfas, are concerned, respectively, with the psychological base of ecstasy and with communication of paradoxical states, especially in the Christian tradition.

I recommend the volume edited by Cancik to all students of religion wanting a balanced view of such a decisive religious experience as ecstasy. Both quantitatively—as far as the bibliography is concerned—and qualitatively, *Rausch—Extase—Mystik* represents first-class material born from those fecund *Ringvorlesungen* at Tübingen. [IOAN PETRU CULIANU, *University of Groningen*]

"Vor Gott sind alle gleich": Soziale Gleichheit, soziale Ungleichheit und die Religionen. Edited by GÜNTER KEHRER. Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1983. Pp. 248.

The volume edited by Günter Kehrер represents, if not the latest, then one of the latest products of the *Tübinger religionswissenschaftliche Ringvorlesungen*, which have now a solid reputation. The book's thirteen contributions debate in what ways religion has interfered with the social order in different parts of the world and at different times.

Günter Kehrер is concerned with the problem of inequality in general and thus especially with its sociobiological aspects. Is "behavioral dominance" in animal societies the equivalent, and the forerunner, of inequality in human societies? The author is very prudent and gives no decisive answer. Neither does he take a particular stand on the sociological theories of human inequality. He only points to the complexities of the problem, which are only increased by adding a further factor to the whole game of inequality: religion itself. As a matter of fact, religion can be, as the author observes, "a legitimation and a source of social inequality" (pp. 18–25), but it does not represent a mere additional element of social competition.

The other contributions to the volume cover different fields of investigation. Wolfgang Schenkel is concerned with Egyptian religion, Wolfgang Röllig with the ancient Near East, Bernhard Lang and Hans G. Kippenberg with ancient Israel, Fritz Opitz with modern Japan, Peter Schreiner and Suresh A. Upadhyaya with India present and past, Stephen Gero with Islam, Heinz Gaube with Iran before and after the Islamic revolution, and Günter Vogler with the religious implications of the Peasant War in Germany. Two other contributions, by Johannes Neumann and Hubert Cancik, are more general in that they concern the origins of a Western institution: modern law. Hubert Cancik, in